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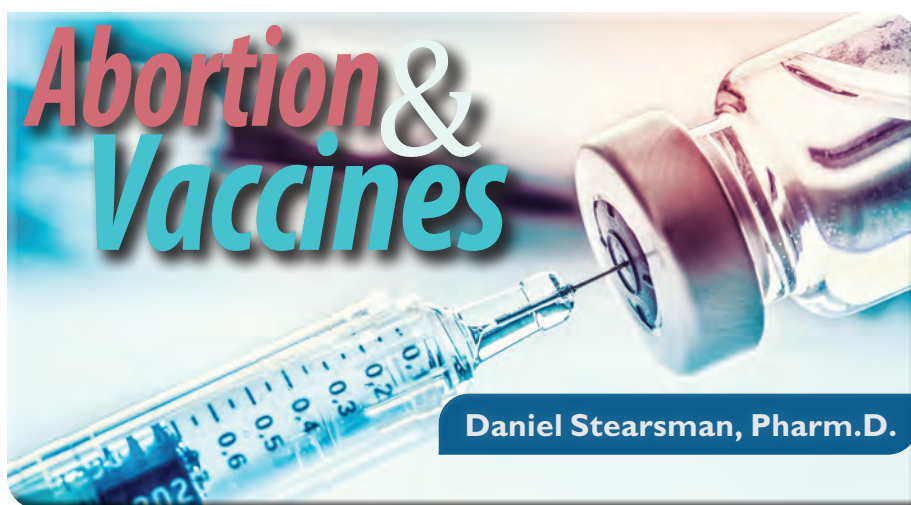
Abortion & VACCINES



God's
Fierce Anger?

40
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[EDITOR'S NOTE: AP auxiliary staff writer Dr. Stearsman holds an M.A. in Bioethics and Medical Humanities from the University of South Florida, as well as the Doctor of Pharmacy degree from the University of Florida. He has taught courses in the University of South Florida College of Medicine and the University of Florida College of Pharmacy.]

Q: *Can vaccines be used in good conscience if the vaccine was developed using tissue from aborted fetuses?*

A: In 2015 a group by the name of Center for Medical Progress set up a fake company called Biomax that infiltrated Planned Parenthood, exposing some of its inner workings.¹ Biomax interviewed people in high positions and exposed how Planned Parenthood stood to profit from abortions by selling recovered fetal tissue to researchers. The videos ignited a media frenzy and sent shock waves throughout the nation. In response, Raegan McDonald-Mosley, the Chief Medical Officer for Planned Parenthood, denied any wrongdoing in *The New England Journal of Medicine* as he reported that 1% of approximately 700 health centers nationwide assist patients who wish to donate fetal tissue following abortion.²

Advancing to 2020 with the race to find a safe and effective vaccine for treating COVID-19, questions have arisen concerning the development of potential vaccine candidates from aborted fetal cell lines. In June of 2019 the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) suspended funding for research within the National Institutes of Health (NIH) where acquisition of new fetal tissue would be required.³ While contracts within the NIH that use new fetal cell lines have been discontinued,⁴ cell lines from decades-old aborted fetuses are still being used in developing a vaccine candidate.⁵ If a candidate is developed from decade-old fetal cell lines, would consenting to vaccines or administering vaccines be justified in God's eyes? Can a straight line be drawn from abortion to patient use?

Examining the morality of vaccine use involves looking at individual patient choices in view of the larger public and global health. Vaccines are intended either to prevent or treat disease.⁶ Individual patients vaccinate to prevent or treat disease that ultimately could be fatal. From a public health perspective, vaccines are intended to protect the larger public from disease and possible death but, as with any human action, it is important to consider

God's thinking on the matter before acting.⁷

THE HISTORY AND ORIGIN OF VACCINES

For more than 80 years, aborted human embryos and fetuses have been used to research and develop vaccines.⁸ As far back as the 1930s, Olitsky and others used brain tissue from human embryos to grow polio-virus.⁹ Since that time, vaccines against measles, rubella, chickenpox, shingles, rabies, Hepatitis A, and polio have been created using fetal tissue.¹⁰ In addition to vaccines, fetal cell lines are used in research or treatments for Parkinson Disease,¹¹ HIV, Hepatitis B and C, retinal disease, and fetal development.¹² In 2014, the National Institutes of Health funded 164 projects using fetal tissue totaling \$76 million and more than \$152 million in embryonic stem cell research for the same period.¹³

Several prominent cell lines exist that are the products of abortion. HEK-293 is a cell line that originated from the kidney cells of an aborted embryo from 1972¹⁴ and that is cited in more than 28,000 articles.¹⁵ This cell line is commonly used in gene therapy where adenovirus is used to deliver experimental genes.¹⁶ Other cell lines include: PER.C6 which was isolated from the retinal cells of an 18-week-old fetus in 1985,¹⁷ WI-38 from lung tissue of an aborted 12-week-old fetus, and MRC-5 from lung tissue of an abortion of a 14-week-old fetus.¹⁸ The WI-38 cell line goes back to a single abortion in 1961.¹⁹ To be clear, these cell lines do not require multiplied continual abortions today, but rather are the product of single abortions that happened decades ago.²⁰

THE LANGUAGE OF ABORTION

Understanding the language of abortion is essential in examining questions of conscience since sometimes the technical language can be quite confusing.²¹ The way doctors may technically use terms may be quite different from the way the public uses them. In medical texts, like *Williams Gynecology*, abortions are distinguished as either therapeutic or elective (voluntary) and either spontaneous or induced.²² The language in medicine can be confusing and disturbing to mothers. For example, a physician might call a spontaneous delivery (miscarriage) an abortion because pregnancy ends.²³ If a mother were to hear this verbiage she might be shocked, especially when she bears no moral guilt for the fetal demise and when the death was clearly out of her control. Morally, such cases are quite different than when a mother aborts for economic reasons, convenience, rape, or incest. Electively killing the unborn is a conscious choice made by some mothers and supported medically by practitioners and abortion advocates.

STREAMLINING THE MORAL QUESTIONS

Moral concerns are voiced in how vaccines are researched. If vaccines are created from research that uses embryos or fetal tissue recovered from an elective abortion, can one in good conscience consent to the use of the vaccine for himself or a loved one (e.g., child)? The concern here is that consenting to a vaccine makes one a participant in abortion or, at the very least, implies an endorsement of abortion. What are the grounds of this concern? Are vaccine users contributing to the death of the unborn?

In analyzing this multifaceted issue, two clear moral questions arise. First, is it moral to abort? Second, is it moral to use aborted tissue? Morally, these are two distinct acts. In examining the moral and scientific evidence, let us examine if one can morally consent to a vaccine while not consenting to abortion. Or, is consenting to certain vaccines necessarily consenting to, or even encouraging in some way, abortion?

MORAL PRINCIPLES AND ABORTION

Morally, there are several principles that come into play in examining abortion. One principle is that human life, including the life of the unborn, is ultimately valued by God Who created man in His image (Genesis 1:27). God gives and sustains the very breath of life of all mankind (Genesis 1:30; 2:7; Acts 17:25). The ancients understood that life had value prior to birth (cf. Exodus 21:22-25). Roughly 700 years prior to Christ, God said: "Ephraim's glory shall fly away like a bird—no birth, no pregnancy, no conception" (Hosea 9:11, ESV). From this passage, there can be no doubt

that those of old possessed some knowledge of maternal changes and fetal development. Job and Jeremiah understood the value of human life prior to birth (Job 3:1-3,11; 10:18-19; Jeremiah 20:14-18). This life created by God possesses dignity that calls for respect and sanctity that calls for reverence.²⁴

Second, human life is not only valued, but the destruction of innocent human life is condemned by God (Proverbs 6:16-17, Deuteronomy 19:10, Psalms 72:12-14). Elective abortion destroys innocent human life when pregnancy is terminated. This taking of innocent human life is condemned by God (Mark 7:21).

Third, a human owes a duty to his neighbor (Luke 10:25-37). This involves looking to exactly when a human becomes a neighbor. A human becomes a neighbor precisely at the point of fertilization—the joining of sperm and egg.²⁵ Prior to fertilization no specific or separate human existed. God says that man has a duty to love his neighbor as himself (Matthew 22:39). Elective abortion violates the Golden Rule

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that states whatever we wish others would do to us, we should do to them (Matthew 7:12). Note that one's relationship to his neighbor is not predicated on how he has been treated—the principle of reciprocity. Instead, God entreats a higher moral standard to treat people how “we wish” they treated us. The Golden Rule points to a higher moral framework, a Divine path that acts, instead of reacts. Every mother that practices abortion deprives a separate life of the opportunity that she enjoys. The glory of this distinct life that is so dependent on her is tragically cut off. These three principles prove that the act of abortion is sinful. But what about the second question: is it moral to use aborted tissue?

RESEARCH AND BEING COMPLICIT

To answer this question, the moral principle of complicity needs to be considered. One is complicit when he consents to the acts of others, either for good or for evil. If one grants approval to evil, one bears culpability and guilt in that evil act (Romans 1:32).²⁶ Interestingly, there seems to be no market or bank of tissue deposits that come from miscarriages or instances of **natural** fetal demise. The majority, if not all, of the fetal tissue comes from **elective** abortions. Does that mean that research on vaccines encourages abortions? Can a direct line from abortion be drawn to patients who use them?

Although recent limitations have been enacted, in public research there is certainly a market for the tissue of the unborn. The Federal Government recognized that this market may create unethical incentives and has set up certain restrictions that Institutional Review Boards (IRBs) monitor for compliance so that human subjects are

protected in research. That federal statute states:

§45 CFR 46.204 Research involving pregnant women or fetuses.

- ~ (a) – (g)
- (h) *No inducements, monetary or otherwise, will be offered to terminate a pregnancy;*
- (i) *Individuals engaged in the research will have no part in any decisions as to the timing, method, or procedures used to terminate a pregnancy; and*
- (j) *Individuals engaged in the research will have no part in determining the viability of a neonate.*²⁷

This statute intends to prevent research from increasing the number of abortions to achieve certain research ends. While there may be a desire to use aborted tissue, the researcher is put at a distance to prevent influencing one to abort. If the statute is followed, no direct line exists between researcher and abortion. The **desire** for tissue is separated from the actual **cause** of death. **Therefore, a direct line from vaccine user to abortion does not exist.**²⁸

PARALLEL IN ORGAN RECOVERY

Tissue from organ donors is recovered after death in the United States for medical use and clinical research. Medical uses include a myriad of transplantation and graft procedures. Research uses are even broader and include donations for education. In medicine, the goal of these donations is to benefit a particular patient. In research, the goal is to advance general or applied knowledge on a topic.

There are several ethical risks that often surround organ donations or anatomical gifts. One is that medi-

cal staff will end the life of a person prematurely simply to recover their organs for some benefactor. State laws address and mitigate these issues head on by limiting incentives for providers in recovering organs. Hospital administrators will notify recovery organizations, but then largely step out of the way as separate staff recover vital organs. In the state of Florida, for example, an attending physician who certifies the death may not be paid or reimbursed for participation in organ recovery or be employed by a procurement organization.²⁹ In medical practice, those who care for those near the end of life (like attending physicians, hospitalists, or hospice providers) are different from those who recover the organs (the recovery organization).

One might wonder how organ recovery relates to the use of cell lines that originated from aborted fetal tissue. Where these two cases differ is in how one dies. In organ recovery cases, doctors attempted to preserve the life of the donor, and healing and comfort are offered up until death. In abortion, however, the unborn life is not offered this same courtesy.

What then is the similarity between organ recovery and tissue recovery following abortion? The parallel is that in both instances tissue is recovered **following death**.³⁰ **Neither the need for organs nor the desire to advance research are the means by which death occurs or the impetus for it.** Both merely involve how tissues are used after death has occurred.³¹ There are two distinct moral acts under consideration. One act is abortion, which is biblically wrong. Another act is the use of tissue after death which, in the case of vaccine research, has nothing to do with the mother's decision to sinfully abort the child in the first place.

CONCLUSION

In summary, man should continue to stand against the evils of abortion. Further, viable embryos should be protected and not destroyed in the name of research or medical practice. Concerning the conscientious use of vaccines, there is no direct causal line between abortion and vaccine use. Given that the moral question of how one dies is materially different from what one does with the body after death, one can in good conscience consent to a vaccine without necessarily consenting to abortion.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ Owen Dyer (2015), "Planned Parenthood Accuses Anti-Abortion Group of 'Corporate Espionage' for Promoting Misleading Video," *theBMJ*, 351:h3996, July.
- ² Raegan McDonald-Mosley (2015), "Tearing Down the Fetal Tissue Smokescreen," *The New England Journal of Medicine*, 373[2377]:24, December 10.
- ³ HHS Press Office (2019), "Statements from the Department of Health and Human Services," <https://www.hhs.gov/about/news/2019/06/05/statement-from-the-department-of-health-and-human-services.html>.
- ⁴ HHS Press Office.
- ⁵ Meridith Wadman (2020), "Abortion Opponents Protest COVID-19 Vaccines' Use of Fetal Cells," *Science Magazine*, June 5, <https://www.sciencemag.org/news/2020/06/abortion-opponents-protest-covid-19-vaccines-use-fetal-cells>.
- ⁶ Angus Dawson (2007), "Vaccination Ethics," *Healthcare Ethics*, ed. Richard Ashcroft, Angus Dawson, Heater Draper and John McMillan (West Sussex, England: John Wiley & Sons), Second Edition, p. 617.
- ⁷ The focus of this article is not on the benefits versus risks analysis that would be considered in making the medical or clinical decision to consent to vaccines. Further, the focus here is not should one use vaccines nor must one use vaccines. Instead, the focus is on whether, given the history of their origin in research and development, the Bible would excuse the conscience in exercising liberty to use vaccines (cf. Romans 2:15).
- ⁸ Generally, the designation "embryo" refers to development up to the end of the eighth week of gestational development. "Fetus" is the designation from week nine up until birth. Although these words are inconsistently used in scientific literature and dictionaries, life has value from the beginning regardless of how people describe it.
- ⁹ Shari Gelber, Laurence McCullough, and Frank Chervenak (2015), "Fetal Tissue Research: An Ongoing Story of Professionally Responsible Success," *American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology*, 213[6]:819, October 23.
- ¹⁰ Meredith Wadman (2015), "The Truth About Fetal Tissue Research," *Nature*, 528[7581]:179, December 10.
- ¹¹ Gelber, McCullough, and Chervenak, p. 819.
- ¹² Wadman, "The Truth....," p. 179.
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- ¹⁶ Alvin Wong (2006), "The Ethics of HEK 293," *National Catholic Bioethics Quarterly*, 6[3]:474, Autumn.
- ¹⁷ Wadman, "Abortion Opponents...."
- ¹⁸ Wong, pp. 475-476.
- ¹⁹ Daniel Maher (2002), "Vaccines, Abortion, and Moral Coherence," *National Catholic Bioethics Quarterly*, 2[1]:55, Spring.
- ²⁰ Maher, p. 55.
- ²¹ Andrew Moscrop (2013), "'Miscarriage or Abortion?' Understanding the Medical Language of Pregnancy Loss in Britain; A Historical Perspective," *Medical Humanities*, 39[2]:98-104, December.
- ²² B.L. Hoffman, J.O. Schorge, J.I. Schaffer, L.M. Halvorson, K.O. Bradshaw, F.G. Cunningham, L.E. Calver (2012), "Chapter 6. First-Trimester Abortion," in *Williams Gynecology*, ed. B.I. Hoffman, J.O. Schorge, J.I. Schaffer, L.M. Halvorson, K.O. Bradshaw, F.G. Cunningham, and L.E. Calver, 2e, <http://www.accessmedicine.com/content.aspx?aID=56695971>.
- ²³ Moscrop.
- ²⁴ Norman Geisler (2010), *Christian Ethics: Contemporary Issues and Options* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic), second edition, p. 187.
- ²⁵ Dave Miller (2003), "Abortion and the Bible," <https://apologeticspress.org/apcontent.aspx?category=7&article=445>.
- ²⁶ Another passage on being morally complicit occurs in the Old Testament when the prophet Jehu says to King Jehoshaphat, "Should you help the wicked and love those who hate the Lord? Therefore the wrath of the Lord is upon you" (2 Chronicles 19:2).
- ²⁷ See <https://oir.nih.gov/sourcebook/ethical-conduct/special-research-considerations/fetal-tissue-research/reminder-intramural-investigators-legal-requirements-regarding>.
- ²⁸ In law, in the study of damages (torts), proximate cause is defined as the primary cause or direct cause of damage or injury. A user of a vaccine is not a direct (or proximate) cause of a decades-old abortion. See "proximate cause" in *Black's Law Dictionary*, second edition, <https://thelawdictionary.org/proximate-cause/>.
- ²⁹ F.S. 765.517[2].
- ³⁰ Please note that these two cases do not take up the possibility of a viable embryo being collected during abortion.
- ³¹ While mourning for loss is appropriate (Matthew 5:4, John 11:35), duties toward the living terminate upon death (cf. Romans 7:1-3). Sanctity (treating with holiness) and dignity (treating with respect) are duties that are owed to living human beings while they abide in the flesh (Exodus 4:11; Psalm 8:4; Genesis 1:26-28; Acts 17:29). Upon death, the mortal body perishes and so diminishes the sanctity and dignity (1 Corinthians 15:53-55). In death, the flesh returns to dust and the spirit to God Who gave it (Genesis 3:19; Ecclesiastes 3:20; 12:7; James 2:26).

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A GREAT disservice has been committed against the present generation of Americans. An inaccurate picture of the character and nature of God has been created. But only God's Word can provide us with a balanced, healthy comprehension of God's personal attributes. Only the Bible can bestow upon us the appropriate interplay between the love and mercy of God, as well as the wrath and anger of God. Many people today have failed to assess properly the reality of God's wrath. They have substituted emotion and human feelings for truth and the clear statements of God.

A general attitude of permissiveness, laxity, and indiscriminating tolerance has blanketed American society. Many Christians comfortably relax in the presence of impenitent sin and open defiance of the laws of God—using the refrain that, after all, “nobody’s perfect.” Christians demonstrate a willingness to toy with unscriptural innovation—after all, “God wants us to be happy and to

express ourselves.” Church members entertain fellowship with false religion—after all, “it’s sincerity that counts,” not whether you conform to the objective, absolute will of God. Churches lose their sense of alarm and urgency in providing wayward church members and the unevangelized with the divine antidote to sin and their lost condition.

Out of this context, voices have arisen that focus almost exclusively upon the love of God. Emphasis is repeatedly placed upon God's compassion, mercy, and grace—to the neglect of other attributes of God. While one never can emphasize God's love enough, one can be guilty of misrepresenting the true nature of that love. One can so present the love of God that the equally biblical doctrine of God's wrath makes no sense, and eventually fades into irrelevance.

THE LOVE OF GOD

Many Bible passages detail the amazing love of God. Consider

the following from the New Testament:

Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things (Matthew 6:30,32).

If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him! (Matthew 7:11).

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved (John 3:16-17).

For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:6-8).

He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? (Romans 8:32).

By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren (1 John 3:16).

In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins (1 John 4:8-10).

[T]he kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared (Titus 3:4).

Even in the Old Testament, God's amazing love is expressed repeatedly:

And the Lord passed before him and proclaimed, "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin" (Exodus 34:6-7).

As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us (Psalm 103:12).

"Come now, and let us reason together," says the Lord, "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isaiah 1:18).

I had great bitterness; but You have lovingly delivered my soul from the pit of corruption, for You have cast all my sins behind Your back (Isaiah 38:17).

I have blotted out, like a thick cloud, your transgressions, and like a cloud, your sins. Return to Me; for I have redeemed you (Isaiah 44:22).

He will again have compassion on us, and will subdue our iniquities. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea (Micah 7:19).

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Of course, the Bible contains many more similar allusions. These few serve to summarize the basic nature of the incredible love of God. God loves every single human being. He wants every single person to obey Him so that He can usher every person into eternity in His presence. "God...is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9). God "desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:4).

THE WRATH OF GOD

But, having noted the reality of the wonderful love of God for all people, the reader is urged to integrate and harmonize this attribute of God with what the Scriptures teach about God's wrath. Numerous passages in both the Old and New Testaments depict God as a God Who executes His wrath against people. Notice the following from the Old Testament:

For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me (Exodus 20:5).

[B]y no means clearing the guilty (Exodus 34:7).

[L]est the anger of the Lord your God be aroused against you and destroy you from the face of the earth (Deuteronomy 6:15).

For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality nor takes a bribe (Deuteronomy 10:17).

Then the anger of the Lord was aroused against this land, to bring

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on it every curse that is written in this book. And the Lord uprooted them from their land in anger, in wrath, and in great indignation, and cast them into another land, as it is this day (Deuteronomy 29:27-28).

Then My anger shall be aroused against them in that day, and I will forsake them, and I will hide My face from them, and they shall be devoured. And many evils and troubles shall befall them, so that they will say in that day, "Have not these evils come upon us because our God is not among us?" (Deuteronomy 31:17).

Moving to the New Testament, notice the following verses:

And I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear Him who, after He has killed, has power to cast into hell; yes, I say to you, fear Him! (Luke 12:4-5).

[S]ince it is a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you, and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These shall be punished

with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9).

God struck dead two Christians, a husband and wife, in the church at Jerusalem (Acts 5:1-11). The writer of Hebrews provided this sober warning:

For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries. Anyone who rejected Moses' law died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God under foot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. And again, "The Lord will judge His people." It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God (Hebrews 10:26-31).

He then added: "For our God is a consuming fire" (Hebrews 12:29). Given today's religious climate, many people do not believe that such verses exist in the Bible. Or they ignore them or insist that

Given today's religious climate, many people do not believe that such verses exist in the Bible.

they do not apply today. What a tragic mistake! The Bible is replete with such references to the wrath and justice of God, and it is imperative that we accept them and respond accordingly.

Consider the example of the great Judean king Hezekiah. He endeavored to bring the nation back into harmony with God's written revelation. Why? "...that His fierce wrath may turn away from us." That expression is used three times in the context (2 Chronicles 29:10; 30:8; 32:26). King Josiah found himself in a similar circumstance. When he realized the extent to which the nation had departed from God's will, he tore his robes and declared: "[G]reat is the wrath of the Lord that is poured out upon us, because our fathers have not kept the word of the Lord, to do after all that is written in this book" (2 Chronicles 34:21).

People in our day go merrily on their way, out of harmony with God's written Word, consoling themselves with a false view of God's love. They are like Jeremiah's contemporaries, who tried to heal the hurt of the people "slightly." "Slightly" meant they did not consider their neglect of God's will to be all that serious. They said, "Peace, Peace" when there was no peace as long as they were out of harmony with the Scriptures (Jeremiah 6:14).

The time has come to approach the situation the way the prophets of God did. Read the Old Testament books written by the

The time has come to approach the situation the way the prophets of God did.

prophets—like Amos, Joel, and Habakkuk. As they did, we need to warn people today about the reality of God's wrath and its inevitable occurrence. One day, all people will know what God's wrath is. Listen again to the words of Paul in 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9: "[T]he Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who know not God, and who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord."

It is absolutely imperative that we live our lives everyday with a correct understanding of both the **love** of God and the **wrath** of God. The same God Who speaks of the availability of an eternal home of bliss called heaven is the same God Who will provide an eternal place of conscious pain called hell. Consider closely Paul's summary given to Christians in Rome, warning them of the danger of losing their salvation: "Therefore, consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness. Otherwise

you also will be cut off” (Romans 11:22).

Did you know that God cannot save everybody? “But I thought God can do anything?” Not true! The Bible certainly represents God as omnipotent—all-powerful (Romans 1:20; Ephesians 1:19). But we misunderstand the power of God if we think He somehow is going to gloss over people’s rejection of His words and save everyone. God simply cannot do that and still be God! God, as a loving Being whose nature demands that He grant humans free will, is powerless to save people who do not want to be saved. He cannot save people who refuse to take advantage of the antidote to sin that He has provided. He is incapable of saving those who reject the one and only means by which they can be forgiven of sin.

God made provision for human sin by sending His Son to die in place of us. Only the sacrifice of Christ had the atoning power to pay for our sin. But the very nature of the Universe is such that God gave us free moral agency. He cannot interfere with our own wills and coerce us to be saved. **We** must make the choice. We are responsible for all of our choices. If we wish to take advantage of the free gift of salvation available in Christ, we must freely choose to believe, to repent of our sins, to confess Jesus to be divine, and to be immersed in water for the forgiveness of our sins. Passage after passage in the New Testament indicates that this is the divine plan of salva-

tion for human beings. Hear the Gospel message of salvation and choose to believe (Romans 10:17). Change your mind about your past sinful conduct (Acts 17:30). Confess with your mouth that Jesus is the Son of God (Romans 10:9-10). Then allow someone to baptize you, that is, immerse you in water with the understanding that **in that action**, the blood of Jesus will wash away your sins by the grace of God (Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16; Titus 3:5; 1 Peter 3:21).

If you deliberately reject these simple instructions on how to become a Christian, then you will have no one else to blame in eternity when you experience the wrath and punishment of God. When one becomes a Christian, then a new life commences. Now that person will study the Scriptures in order to learn how to live the Christian life. He or she will find out how God wants to be worshipped. “You mean, I can’t just worship God **spontaneously** out of my own incli-

nations?” Jesus said, “God is Spirit, and those who worship Him **must worship in spirit and truth**” (John 4:24).

A person also will determine which church Christ endorses, and refrain from associating with churches spawned by mere men. “You mean one church is not as good as another?” That’s correct. Jesus did not build a multiplicity of churches. He built **only one** (Ephesians 4:4; 1 Corinthians 12:20). He declared: “I will build **My** church” (Matthew 16:18).

A fitting summary regarding the nature of God and how all people must make preparation now for eternity is found in 2 Corinthians 5:10-11: “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. Knowing, therefore, the **terror** of the Lord, we persuade men.”

SPEAKING SCHEDULES

Kyle Butt

September 2,9,16	Winchester, TN	(931) 967-1441
September 23	Stantonville, TN	(731) 632-4678

Eric Lyons

September 6	Wetumpka, AL	(334) 567-6561
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Dave Miller

September 6	Montgomery, AL	(334) 264-2985
September 23	Huntsville, AL	(256) 895-8717

Jeff Miller

September 20	Montgomery, AL	(334) 264-2985
Sept. 27-Oct. 1	Carlinsville, IL	(217) 854-4824



NOTE FROM *The Editor*



AP Study Bible Now Available in Maroon Italian Duotone

The response to and interest in the AP Study Bible has been phenomenal. Here are a few reactions:

“Congratulations on a fantastic production.”

“Just wanted to let you know that I received the Defending the Faith Study Bible I ordered from you. It is a very nice Bible and I already can’t wait until I finish with work this evening so I can read it!! Thank you so much for such a high-quality Bible!!”

“The Bible I ordered is the best I have ever owned. Thank you for getting it out in a timely manner.”

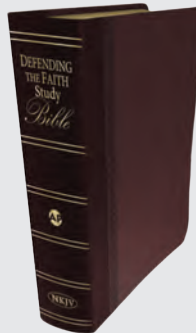
“I have now read a second time the article found in your recent Defending the Faith Study Bible just prior to the book of Acts. I believe this article alone should be read by as many people as possible. It would be great if it could appear in a tract so that others, especially those who do not yet own your study bible, could read this powerful and well-reasoned article. I believe it to be so good of an article that it makes me extremely excited to see what else your Study Bible says.”

We are grateful that, with the Lord’s blessing, the Study Bible has been so well received and so helpful to a host of individuals. In addition to the original hardback edition, the black leather cover, and charcoal gray Italian duotone cover, we

are pleased to release yet another cover: Maroon Italian Duotone.

Since this study Bible is, specifically, an **apologetics** study Bible, it contains special sections that cover topics such as God’s existence, the Inspiration of the Bible, Theistic Evolution, Science and the Bible, God’s Justice and Hell, the Bible and Slavery, the Deity of Christ, and so much more. It is packed with beautiful, professional artwork, charts, and photographs that accentuate the biblical text and its message. This volume is designed to defend the Christian religion against skeptics and atheists, while building the confidence of Christians in their ability to deflect attacks upon their faith from a society saturated with unbelief. In addition to the centerspread in this issue of *R&R*, go to our Web site for more information.

Dave Miller



See Center Spread
for More Details